

WASHINGTON, DC - On Sunday, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez (CA-39) addressed the opening session of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) National Policy Conference in Washington, DC. Congresswoman Sánchez spoke to the shared values between the United States and Israel and the importance of supporting and strengthening the relationship between the two. Following are the remarks given at the AIPAC Conference:

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

During a trip to Sri Lanka soon after the tsunami struck, I toured the region, watching the ravaged landscape roll by from inside a bus. Sitting among other members of congress, I remember feeling a sense of despair for those affected by the devastation.

But then something happened. Someone called for the bus to stop, and we turned to see what was going on. There, among a ruined village, waved the Star of David – the Israeli flag.

Beneath the flag, a group of Israeli aid workers were running a day camp for children orphaned by the tragedy. That day, I watched as the Israelis – miles from home – brought light back into the lives of these children, most of whom were Muslim. And I felt sadness turn into hope.

During a recent trip to Israel I visited an absorption center for newly arrived Ethiopian immigrants. I saw staff members working patiently and lovingly with their new countrymen to help ease the transition to a new land, a new life.

America and Israel share so much. We both celebrate democracy and freedom. We feel an obligation to make the world a better place for all people.

As a member of congress I am often confronted with questions of peace and security. I am proud of my participation in the democratic Israel working group. As a coalition of pro-Israel democratic members, we are dedicated to seeking Middle East democracy and fighting for Israel's security.

In congress, our shared commitment is helping to end tyranny and protect Israeli families.

I am Congresswomen Linda Sánchez, and I am proud to say that Israel is an American value.